The

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Notes of the Month.

SINCE the last issue of this Magazine one subject has engrossed the minds of all thoughtful people, viz., that of the great war of European nations. Although the danger was not unforseen a month ago, yet we still hoped that something might intervene to avert the dreaded calamity to civilisation. It seemed too terrible that nations professedly Christian would resort to war, reinforced as it was bound to be by all the resources of modern science. But despite attempts to secure mediation continued up to the last moment, the fatal step was taken which precipitated a conflict whose consequences even the most imaginative cannot foreshadow but which will assuredly be felt by all living persons. It is not for us to apportion blame, nor has the time arrived when even the best informed can do so with wisdom and impartiality It is sufficient for us to feel that our own representatives did not willingly join issue, but on the contrary strove whole-heartedly to secure a peaceable outcome. That feeling is alone responsible for the splendid unanimity which has characterised our nation and our colonies from the moment that British intervention proved unavoidable. It is not easy to perceive any good in war that can possibly outweigh its most obvious evils, yet in a time of war such as that in which we now find ourselves, it is inspiring to see a spirit of sacrifice so spontaneous and so general as that so signally manifested throughout our Empire. We need to foster it in ourselves and to evoke it in others, since the occasions for its exercise are likely to prove only too numerous during the coming months. May we all prove equal to the demands upon our calmness, our constancy, and our Christian charity!

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Amid the intense excitement caused by the war, one event, otherwise sufficiently noteworthy, has hardly received the attention it deserved. We allude to the death of the Pope, Pius X. While his period of office was not so long or so eventful as that of some of his predecessors, yet it is not likely to prove unimportant or uninfluential. Markedly conservative in its theological and ecclesiastical aspects, the late Pope's career was raised above the commonplace by its intense and sincere note of personal piety and its utter absence of ostentation and self-seeking.

However mistaken his attitude to modern knowledge, as clearly manifest in his crusade against Modernism, his influence told strongly in favour of practical Christianity. It is quite credible that his end was hastened by the terrible European conflict which weighed so heavily upon his mind and which his influence was powerless to avert, exercised though it was up to the very last.

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During the present month many of our congregations will be arranging celebrations for the completion of harvest. So far from this time of National trial forbidding such or making them appear inappropriate, there would seem additional reason for expressing our devout gratitude to the Great Creator. It is precisely at such a time that we realise our dependence upon God. All the more reason then that the fact of the good harvest such as now seems assured should call forth fit and opportune expression, and we hope that in all such celebrations our people may receive a deeper revelation of the Divine Providence and the priceless gifts it has again made possible.

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Many of our readers will learn with profound regret of the death of Mr. John Rogers, news of which has reached us while these notes are being prepared. In him the First Church, Belfast, has lost an old and valued member, and our community a most devoted and generous helper. His sound judgment, his great business capabilities were ever placed freely at the service of our Non-Subscribing Church, and to none was its success a matter of deeper concern. If in recent years his state of health made attendance at our meetings increasingly difficult if not impossible, his name was retained on our committees as that of one who was in very truth an Elder Emeritus, and whose unselfish services, no less than his splendid personality, represented all that was best in the faith he so strongly cherished.

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"Give me, kind Heaven, a private station,
A mind serene for contemplation;
Title and profit I resign,
The post of honour shall be mine."—*Gay.*

A MESSAGE FOR THE PEOPLE.

(*From the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.*)

In this hour of terrible trial for the nations of Europe we shall do well to encourage and strengthen one another in cleaving to that which is good, Two great temptations beset us: one. to lose the higher spirit in anger, not altogether unrighteous anger, against those who have dragged the nations into this fearful calamity, and in bitter feelings towards those who are now our enemies; the other, to lose faith in the eternal supremacy of Justice and Love, when we think of millions of men who have no grudge against one another being driven to mutual carnage by small groups of statesmen.

In regard to the first let us remember that anger cannot judge justly, and the time for judgment is not yet. The Christian law of love extends to enemies—a height which it is very hard to reach; but we can slay the enemy in our own hearts through prayer, and preserve a holy calm, which may shed its healing influence when the time comes.

The temptation to despair may be diminished if we remember the signs of degeneracy which have made many of us anxious during recent years, and reflect that some great shock may have been needed to teach us that life is more than ease and pleasure, and consists not in the abundance of the things that we possess. We have often asked ourselves how much Christianity was left in so-called Christendom, and when the politicians of the world would have any faith in Christ whom they professed to worship. As in the evil days when the light of Christianity first rose upon the world, may we not hope that, when these horrors are past, there will be a new coming of the Son of Man, seen in the advent of a true Kingdom of Humanity, when the nations will recognise that all are children of God, and those who are appointed to rule will feel the solemnity of their high calling as servants of the Prince of Peace?

It is for us to watch and pray and labour for the coming of that time, and to cherish in ourselves that Holy Spirit without which all is war and confusion. When Europe has been sufficiently deluged with blood, some sort of settlement must come, and the voice of reason and justice be listened to owing to the mere exhaustion of evil passion. Then let us be ready in reconstituting society on a more Christian basis, and providing some more powerful and united expression of the sense of brotherhood, so that the masses of the people may be able to assert the higher will and never again be the helpless slaves of violence and greed. Let the Lord's Prayer, so often uttered, become the real burden of our hearts, and with a depth of meaning unfelt before, let us pray that God's Kingdom may come, and His Will be done on earth, and that we may have grace to forgive as we have been forgiven.

No words are needed to urge each and all to do what in them lies to serve their country in the present crisis; for charity and duty are living and active among us, and will not fail us in the day of need. May God send us a more exalted faith, and a love which is constant, even unto death.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF NATIONS.

By Rev. John Barron.

A STRANGE title apparently for an article, at a time when Europe is plunged into a war such as the world has scarcely known before. Eagerly, every day, and every hour of the day, the latest news is looked for. Great surging waves of varied emotions sweep over the peoples; it is a time of excitement, of intense activity; the words of peace and brotherhood are scarcely heeded, in so far as they apply internationally.

Yet the Brotherhood of Nations exists, as the air we breathe or the solid earth on which we stand. God's Fatherhood remains unshaken — unheeded, perhaps. Man's Brotherhood, forgotten, ignored, is yet a fact based on man's spiritual, eternal, undying, indestructible being. The warring nations are portions of one vast brotherhood.

Religion is that which binds man to God, and man to man. In the midst of conflict what word then has religion? "Thy will be done;" and this not in passive resignation, but in active co-operation. Duty is the method whereby we do God's will. One mighty Will rules over all the conflicting wills of men, and the end can be none other than glorious. "For the sake of the soul the universe exists," and all experience is for the evolution of the race.

Who knows but the world is now to receive such a mighty object lesson of what war means, that when the word of peace shall be spoken by an authoritative voice, bidding the nations cease from their warfare, the appeal will be gladly received and responded to? Human evolution is the climax of God's work on earth. This war may be a quickening, a rapid re-placing of the old order with the new; the opening of people's eyes to the fact to which they are in the main closed—the Brotherhood of Nations.

The word then, that is spoken, is "Duty." To the soldier at the front the meaning of the word is clear. His duty is to fight—to fight without hatred, to fight that the Divine Will through him shall be fulfilled. "I, the Lord, make peace, and create evil; I, the Lord, doeth all these things." God as Creator is also Destroyer. The two modes of action go always hand in hand.

But the war is not fought on the battle-field alone; it is being fought by those who remain behind, on whose shoulders rests the responsibility for the maintenance of the means of subsistence—the farmer gathering in his harvest, the housewife in her daily round of duty. For God, for King, for Country everyone is working. The warrior at the forefront is nerved to his task by the staunchness of those left behind, each in his and her place.

As patriots we *will* victory for the arms of our country and her allies.

That is our first and immediate concern. Beyond that we *will* peace and goodwill, brotherhood among the nations, that when this mighty catastrophe has subsided, men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and shall learn war no more.

THE SPREAD OF DISEASE.

By Mrs. John Campbell, L.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., Edin.

(*Concluded.*)

3. *Scarlatina* is a very infectious thing. The germs may be easily carried by clothes, or books, or papers, as well as by the diseased persons themselves. A missionary in an Irish town visited a house in which a child was ill with scarlatina. He came straight from it to another house, and took on his knee a fine little boy. The boy soon after developed scarlatina and died of it, to the great grief of his mother. The man's action was due to ignorance. He killed the boy because he did not know or did not think of what risks he was subjecting the child to. While ignorance has been an excuse for such carelessness in the past, it must soon come to be regarded as no excuse. With the means we now have of getting information, such conduct must soon come to be regarded as criminal.

4. *Measles* is equally easily carried. It is one of the most serious diseases from which a young child can suffer. The younger the child the greater the danger of death. Yet even at the present time there are people who congratulate themselves on having got the measles over, regardless of the risks they run. If a child is to have measles, the older he is the better chance he has of escaping death. In an epidemic of measles babies die in hundreds.

5 *Whooping cough* is very easily carried. A bad attack of it is very dangerous for an infant or young child. It retards their development greatly. A lady in England visited a house in which children were ill with whooping cough. They played about the room round her. On her return home she did not change her clothes or wash her hands, but sat for a while in the room with her own children who touched her hands and clothes. In due time they all got bad attacks of whooping cough, and had long and serious illnesses.

6. *Diphtheria* is a form of inflammation of the throat which is justly dreaded, both because it often causes death, and because it is liable to be followed by paralysis. It is easily carried on hands or clothes. The affected child, coughing and spluttering, readily throws out showers of germs over anyone near him. Moreover, it is a disease to which the cat tribe are very liable. Some years ago a menagerie visited Belfast, and some of the tigers in it had a disease of the throat. Being in a small, badly-ventilated space, these animals were breathing out and coughing out millions upon millions of the diphtheria bacillus. An epidemic of diphtheria broke out in Belfast, and many children died. The caravans moved out through Antrim, Randalstown, Castledawson, Magherafelt, Moneymore, and Cookstown. At all of these places where they stopped diphtheria broke out. The longer the menageria stayed in a town the more diphtheria there was in that district, and the higher the death rate.

7. *Typhoid fever* is a very dangerous and easily carried disease. The germ in this case has to be swallowed, as it finds its most congenial place in the lower end of the small intestine. It may be carried in milk. A bad epidemic in Belfast broke out on a milk walk which was supplied from a dairy at which a servant man had typhoid. He was attended during his illness by a maid who also milked. The germs got from her hands to the milk, and several people died, while many were seriously ill from it. It may go to its victim in water. A Belfast hospital matron had a habit of drinking water direct from the tap in large quantities. As it was known that there were two or three typhoid cases in the catchment area from which most of the water came to her part of the town, and that the manure pits on the farms around the catchment area drained down a

slope into the reservoir, she was often warned of her danger. She scoffed at this, and said she had been drinking the water for twenty years and had never got harm from it. The doctor's reply was: "If you drink long enough you will surely get the dirty mouthful some day." This she in the end did, and was laid up for three months. If she had boiled her drinking water she would have been quite safe. Within the last six months a case of typhoid occurred in a country house in Ulster. A nurse was sent from Belfast to look after the man. She soon got typhoid and died of it. A second nurse was sent to replace her, and she also got it, but recovered. Although these women were trained nurses, they were evidently careless about washing and disinfecting their hands after touching the patient or his bedclothes.

Typhoid fever is also distributed in another way by people who are known to the doctors as "typhoid carriers." They are people who have had an attack of typhoid themselves, and have never got the germs completely out of their systems. A servant girl came from Liverpool to Belfast. Shortly after her arrival typhoid broke out in her employer's family. She remarked to the doctor that it was very queer that she was so unfortunate in her places, because every time she went to a new place the people took typhoid. She regarded the matter as a piece of ill-luck. The doctor had his suspicions at once aroused, and got the girl examined. She was found to be a "typhoid carrier." She remembered having had typhoid some years before.

Another curious case of this kind occurred in Belfast. A good many years ago, say nine or ten, an epidemic of typhoid broke out on a milk walk in one of the best residential districts in the city. Many people died from it. Every effort was made to trace the origin of the disease. The dairy and all the people about it, the water supply and the cows themselves were inspected without result. The matter remained a mystery. Some five years later an epidemic again broke out on the same milk walk, and many valuable lives were lost. Again an investigation was made, and again no cause could be found. Almost by accident it came out that a woman who lived some little distance away had been employed as an extra milker during the pressure of the busy season. The time of her employment coincided with the time of the typhoid outbreak. She was examined and found to be a typhoid carrier. The proprietor of the dairy then remembered that this woman had milked for him at the time of the first epidemic, and not between it and the last. The whole thing was thus made plain. This one woman had unconsciously started two epidemics and led to many deaths. The moral of this is, that people who have ever had typhoid fever should never handle the food or drink of healthy people, and should frequently wash and disinfect their hands.

Many diseases come to us through animals. Lockjaw is one of these. The germs of it flourish where there is horse manure, and wounds got on our roads or about stables are liable to be infected by it. The disappearance of the horse, as motors become more popular, will likely reduce the danger of lockjaw.

Infantile paralysis is carried in some way in mud and dust. Children playing on a muddy beach near Bristol got it, and a small epidemic occurred. Similarly small outbreaks occurred at a County Down seaside place where there was a muddy beach contaminated by sewage matter. The victims had all been wading in the sea at both these places. Probably they got their hands infected from the mud, and conveyed the disease into themselves with their food. Another epidemic broke out near New York, along seven miles of a notoriously dusty thoroughfare. Thus this disease appears to be got from a wet or a dry source which has been exposed to sewage contamination.

While we know a good deal about the way in which many diseases are spread, there are many others about which we have as yet been unable to find out much. Such is cancer, one of the worst of them. There is a good

deal to show that there are in all civilized countries "cancer houses," that is houses in which successive tenants take cancer within a few months or years of going into the house. There are "cancer districts," in which there are always cases of cancer. Three men set to arrange the books of a man who died of cancer died of the disease within two years. Gardeners are liable to cancer, and this is natural, because many animals have cancer of the bowels. The manure from them probably contains the as yet unfound cancer germ. The manure contaminates the soil, and the gardener's hands convey the disease to his mouth on his pipe shank or on his food.

One might go on for a week talking about cases of disease which have been spread in various ways, but what has already been said is enough to show that—

I. We should keep away as much as we can from people who have any form of disease, and we should especially keep our children away from them.

II. When we get any disease we should do our best to avoid spreading it by keeping away from other people.

III. We should let in sun and air into our rooms, because sunlight and fresh air are the enemies of many disease germs, and will actually kill them. Even if air does not kill them, it dilutes them and weakens their power of doing harm.

IV. We should carefully wash our hands before every meal, and teach our children to do so. Much hand washing is slipshod. Several changes of water should be used when the hands are dirty, as after gardening or working in the fields, and a nail brush should be employed.

V. We should avoid old clothes, unless we know where they come from. When clothes are given to jumble sales, the giver should take care that nothing infectious is sent. Second-hand clothing bought in the dealers' shops should be shunned. Several times bad forms of disease have been known to have been spread by second-hand clothes.

While public health authorities can do much and do much to prevent the spread of disease, we ourselves could do more. We have the matter largely in our own hands. We must try to understand the thing as far as it can at present be understood, and then we should bear in mind the command to do to others as we would that they should do to us. We all depend on one another in regard to the spread of disease. We in fact spread it from one to another. I hope the time will come when all children will be given a smattering of the nature of disease, and the way in which it is spread. Such teaching in the schools could not fail to lay the foundation of a better state of things than we now have. Knowledge, so far as it can be got, and a proper religious feeling for the welfare of others, will do more to stamp out disease than laws and regulations, however good and useful they may be.

THE ARK OF YAHWEH.*

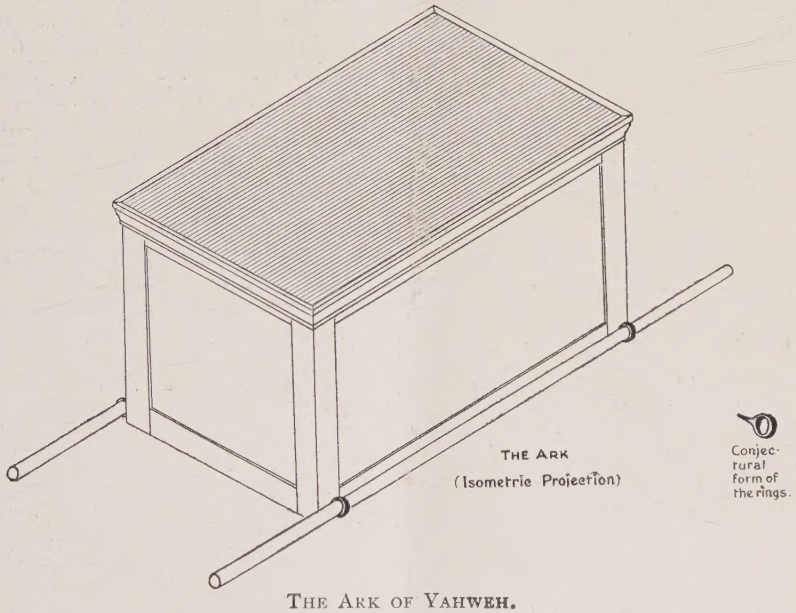
By Rev. Eustace Thompson.

THE Ark is an object referred to in many places in the Old Testament, and in one or two places in the New. In several instances it is represented to have been carried solemnly and reverently by the marching hosts of Israel, and at last as having been brought to rest at Jerusalem, where, it might almost be said, the Temple of Solomon was built expressly to be its enduring home. We may naturally wish to form some idea of the shape, size and appearance of an object of such historical interest and of such importance as it was in the Israelite religion.

The fact on the one hand—for such it will ultimately appear to be—of the ignorance of the Biblical authors themselves as to its original contents, and on the other, the fetishistic qualities attributed to it, suffice to prove that

* The name of the God of Israel (till recently more usually transliterated into the form *Jehovah*), for which, where it occurs in the Hebrew, the words "the Lord" are generally substituted in the English Versions.

the ark or its prototype dated from an extreme antiquity. The description in the Book of Exodus (chap. xxxvii.), written centuries after the date at which it is there stated to have been constructed in the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai, when the Covenant was made through Moses between Yahweh and the Children of Israel, may credibly correspond with the form that was given to it in the time of Solomon, but could hardly have agreed with its original appearance. It is impossible to conjecture the likeness of the golden cherubim, which were probably gilded with depth and breadth both 2 feet 3 inches. It might be more accurate to say that it was ornamented with a moulding, rather than a crown, of gold; this forming, perhaps, a rim projecting a little above, and outside the main sides of the Ark, and serving to keep in place an article called, in the English versions, the *mercy-seat*. The mercy-seat, upon which the images of the two cherubim are said to have been erected and in some way fixed, was not of an elaborate shape, as is often erroneously imagined, but must have been either a plain gilded board or else a simple plate of gold, as may be perceived from the fact that not three, but only two, dimensions are given, these being exactly equal to the length and breadth of the ark itself. The Hebrew term has no etymological connection with *mercy*, and actually means a *covering* or more accurately an *instrument for covering*; whence some have taken it for a kind of lid to the Ark; others, taking as a clue to the truth the allusion in Lev. xvi. 14 to the custom of the high priest of sprinkling the "mercy-seat" with the sacrificial blood upon the great day of atonement, discern the



THE ARK OF YAHWEH.

wooden carvings, combining in form other than human elements; and whilst they were doubtless appropriate features in the embellishments of a later period, it is highly improbable that the like should have belonged to the primitive form of the Ark, the joinery of which must almost certainly have been less elegant, and even less ornate than that suggested in the accompanying figure drawn from the data afforded by the description above referred to. From the said data, the Ark was made of acacia wood, and was something like 3 feet 9 inches long,

figurative sense of the word, and recognise an addition to the Ark placed upon the top of it. The term "mercy-seat" is rather a paraphrase than a translation of the Hebrew. The Israelite with guilty conscience, longing for the mercy of Yahweh, presented himself before the Ark, in the hope that the sprinkling of the blood might be effectual for the covering, or hiding of his sins.

The Ark was borne by priests or Levites by means of gilded wooden staves, fastened to the sides by four gold rings—more probably rings of less costly metal gilded over—fixed, it is said, in the four *feet*, probably meaning the lower extremities of the four corner posts.

According to rabbinic fancy (see Heb. ix. 4) the Ark contained a pot of the manna which had formed the diet of the Israelites during their wandering in the wilderness, and a wonderful almond rod of Aaron's, which was said to have budded miraculously in attestation of his divinely ordained priestly authority; also the two tables of stone, said to have been inscribed by Yahweh with the Ten Commandments. Apart from other consideration for deeming the statement incredible in respect of the first and second articles, in the absence of any similar assertion in the Old Testament there is the definite statement (I. Kings viii. 9) that there was nothing in the Ark save the two tables of stone. But in the opinion of some of the best Biblical scholars, as a matter of historical fact, the Ark had accompanied the movements of the Israelites long before the Commandments were formulated—and very long before; also that its title had been the "Ark of Yahweh" long before the Sinaitic Covenant; hence the conclusion that it was at a comparatively late period that the title was changed to "Ark of the Covenant, or Ark of the Testimony of Yahweh," and the story of the tables of stone invented by way of preserving the ancient relic, whilst disguising the fact that it had formerly been held to be in some sense the actual residence, or at least the particular resort, of the Deity. For, that it was so regarded at some stages of its history is manifest in the light of some of the Biblical assertions. For example, during the journeys of the Children of Israel, when the camp was broken up and the Ark set forward, the leader of the host exclaims, "Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee;" and when the Ark halts he exclaims, "Return, O Lord, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel" (Num. x. 33-36). Just as the Philistines carried their idols into the battle-field in expectation of their help (II. Sam. v. 21), so the Israelites carry the Ark into battle, and the Philistines suppose that it contains the idol or idols of their enemies (I. Sam. iv. 6-8). When the Israelites suffer defeat before Ai, Joshua and their elders prostrate themselves before the Ark until the evening (Josh. vii. 6). The statement that certain Israelites asked counsel of God as to whether they should go out to battle against the Benjamites is explained by the information that the Ark was among them at the time (Judges xx. 27). When David proposes to build a temple for the Ark to abide in, Yahweh replies, "I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the Children of Israel out of Egypt" (II. Sam. vii. 6). A profane approach to the Ark was a perilous thing. In one instance many thousands of people were miraculously slain because some of them impiously looked into it (I. Sam. vi. 19), whilst on another occasion a man who touched it with his hand, even though it had been with the intention of saving it when it appeared to be in danger of a fall, died miraculously and instantaneously (II. Sam. vi. 6). Wonderful events are related to have taken place in the presence of the Ark, as if they were the effects of a Divine force within it.

The following is the history of the Ark of Yahweh as told in the pages of the Old Testament:—Made in accordance with Divine instruction in the neighbourhood of Sinai, the mountain in the south of the triangular promontory dividing the upper end of the Red Sea, it was carried in advance of the

Israelite hosts on their march from Egypt towards the Promised Land. When it reached the Jordan the waters ceased to flow until it had been carried across the bed of the river after all the people had gone over dry-shod (Josh. iii). By being carried round Jericho a specified number of times it caused the walls of the city to fall down flat (Josh. vi). In the days of Eli, the priest who trained the youthful Samuel, the Ark was sheltered in the sanctuary at Shiloh, whence it was taken into battle against the Philistines and captured (I. Sam. iv.). To the Philistines, however, it caused nothing but calamity, for first, being placed in the temple of their own god Dagon, the image of that god fell down "and shamed his worshippers," removed to Gath, and thence to Ekron, it caused great numbers of the inhabitants of those two cities to suffer from tumours. At last, desirous of being rid of it, if it be indeed the cause of these calamities—and they have not come upon them by independent chance—the Philistines place it upon a cart in which they yoke a pair of milk cows and wait to see what will happen. Lo, and behold, the cows draw the cart without driving or leading directly within the borders of Judah (I. Sam. v. 6). There, in a certain house it remained all through the reign of King Saul and during part of the reign of his successor David, who at length brought it to Jerusalem (II. Sam. vi.). Though generally kept in a tent specially constructed for the purpose, it appears to have been taken out to battle on at least one occasion (II. Sam. xi. 11), but when David himself fled out of the city upon the conspiracy of his son Absalom, and one of the priests began to follow him with the Ark, David ordered him to take it back to Jerusalem, and there it remained (II. Sam. xv. 24-29). Soon after his accession, King Solomon carried out the design of his father David to build a temple, in the innermost chamber of which, called the Holy of Holies, he deposited the Ark (I. Kings vi. 8). There the history of the Ark comes to an end. We do not know how long it remained in Jerusalem. It is not mentioned among the spoils of the Temple that were carried off by the Babylonians. Indeed, we have a passage among the prophecies of Jeremiah (iii. 16) written at a date prior to the plundering of the Temple, which clearly implies that it had already disappeared; but we have no information as to what became of it.

It has been conjectured that the antiquity of the Ark (or its prototype) was so great that it originated in an earlier period than that in which the Israelites had begun to recognise Yahweh for their God, and that it may have been constructed for the protection and carriage of some stone or stones —meteoric ones, perhaps—which the Israelites of the day supposed to possess the nature of personality, and which they credited with wonderful qualities and powers favourable to themselves. In a fine poetic passage in the book of Deuteronomy (xxxii. 4, 15, 30, 31) we have words that contain a reminiscence of the days when Israel, like some other peoples, had associated or identified their Deity with a stone or rock. When taken into the service of the Yahwistic faith, the Ark, as we have seen, still retained in the popular belief something of the nature of a fetish. The refusal of David to allow it to share his adventures when he saw himself driven from Jerusalem, seems to imply that he had lost faith in its power to work wonders, that whatever it might have wrought in the past, he believed it had rested from its works upon resting from its travels, and his expressed confidence in the power of God to help and restore him without its presence, certainly implies an advance in spiritual faith. A tradition met with in an apocryphal scripture (II. Maccabees) that the Ark was hidden in a cave by Jeremiah, is suggestive of the possible truth, that the prophets deliberately did away with it in their zeal for the promotion of spiritual faith otherwise in danger of being retarded, at least, by unspiritual and superstitious regard for the nevertheless truly venerable relic.

OUR REST PLACES.

By A. L. Aiman.

AND by these are meant those delightful and unexpected mid-day halts, in all sorts of queer corners, we met with in one of our recent annual tours.

When one's holiday is strictly limited to two or three weeks at the utmost, it is necessary to lay out each day as economically as possible, so far as time is concerned, in order to extract the maximum of pleasure with the minimum of fatigue. We therefore never return to our hotel for lunch, but prefer to trust to chance to provide us with a cup of tea, somewhere between 8 o'clock breakfast and 7 o'clock dinner. We willingly admit that chance is usually very good to us.

When we visited an ancestral hall at Ayton, near Leominster, we found the haunts of our ancestors rather farther from the town than we had expected. So far in fact that 4 o'clock was very near when at last we drew near to the suburbs of Leominster. There we spied a grocer and general dealer's large establishment (what in a more ambitious place would have been styled an "emporium"), where was displayed a notice that "teas were provided." We entered the shop, and meekly asked to be taken in and done for, and were at once requested not to step farther in, but to step out! In other words, we were conducted across the way to the grocer's private residence, a large flat fronted house rising straight off the narrow footpath.

We entered a wide, airy hall, and behind the hall were ushered into a back room, lighted with a square flat window. This overlooked a garden, but what a garden! Remember, it was the latter end of a backward June, the air hot with sunshine, the sky an entrancing blue, flecked with rolling masses of heaped white clouds. In front of the backroom-window is a yard flagged and clean, while along the back part of the house runs a glazed verandah. Under this the grocer's family does its baking, washing, sewing, or ironing when the weather, as it was at the time of our visit, is too hot for work in the kitchen. Where the yard ends the garden begins, without any intervening fence, wall, or rail. And such a garden! A little of everything, and not too much of anything, including a small vinery in which "Paw" could smoke his pipe in the evening.

The grocer and his wife and his youngest daughter, a flower of about four years old, took us all about the garden, after we had lunched royally (the best china, it should be noted, lives in a hole in the wall of the back parlour, shielded from the vulgar gaze by a slight wooden screen), and explained that he was able to crowd his space to such an extent (and really the things were crammed into it, but not weedy) by the liberal use of fertilizers. Flowers, vegetables, and fruit were all mixed up together anyhow. But all were healthy. We were given some special roses, which were at once posted straight away to special friends in the north of England.

On another occasion we were really getting tired out. We had lost our way in Piercefield Park, near Chepstow. We had followed a path which we thought was the right one, only to find that it took us down to the edge of the Wye. And although the Wye is always charming, we would have been willing to exchange the whole of it for one cup of tea, Indian or China, with or without cream or sugar. There was nothing for it but to retrace our steps, and then the male member of the expedition—shame to him—tried a short cut. He ought to have known that it usually is a foolish thing to do without compass. The heat was sub-tropical, the camera heavy, the pathway . . . vanished. At length we reached a track, and joyfully skipped along it, only to find, after some time, that we were walking back along the same path we had tramped an hour before, when we were both cooler and less hungry.

At length I spied the "oldest inhabitant" of a man working some distance away, and from him got the right direction. We had to shout our loudest, he was so far off and rather deaf. The directions were simplicity

itself. Follow the path we are on till we came to a tall gate. We started, and were almost out of earshot, when the ancient hollered after us—

"Sometimes the gate is locked."

"What do we do then?"

"Oh! then you walks back again."

We bowed our heads in sadness and moved on.

"Unless your lady can climb the wall," came after us, as an afterthought.

For half an hour more we followed that wonderful pathway high up above the banks of the Wye, getting magnificent peeps here and there through the trees. Beyond the woods we were gaily trotting along, the whole landscape was shimmering in the glorious sunlight. We walked in speckled shade and were grateful. At length we saw the wall and the gate. My lady thought she might be able to scale the wall; the man who calls himself her husband had his doubts, but wisely kept them to himself. Ye gods! The gate was unlocked, and we were saved, though still a long way from our rest house.

And between us and it stretched half a mile of absolutely unshaded white dusty road. We suffered more during that half mile than we had suffered during the whole day. But at "long last" we reached Moss Cottage, under a high cliff, up a bank, shady, cool, inviting.

Yes, we could have tea—gallons of it—if we wished. And we might have it served outside in a little arbour in full view of the beautiful prospect. We sat there, where many another pair of sweethearts had sat before, and where many another pair would sit after we had gone. We saw none of them that day, however, only goggled motorists in their coughing machines.

We always make a point of arranging that our afternoon teas shall be very simple, and anything else on that day would have clashed with the surroundings. In front and far, far below us the Wye made a horseshoe bend, our cottage being at about the centre of the chord of the two limbs. Deep woods fringed most of the farther side of the river, the rest of the bank being formed of mottled limestone cliffs. On our right were the woods we had toiled amongst during the morning hours—mostly oak and beech trees. Behind us rose the steep rocks leading to Windy Cliff, up which we presently climbed, and were well rewarded for doing so.

Perhaps next to Moss Cottage our most interesting rest place was at Tintern. Here we feasted under a gigantic weeping ash in the garden of the Old Anchor Inn overlooking the Wye. Wherever possible we ordered fruit, and this day we were treated to raspberries and a fruit with a deep purple juice, a kind of whinberry or bilberry. The beautiful old abbey was within a few yards, though not in sight. All the shady spots commanding it were occupied, and even our enthusiasm would not permit us to grizzle for half an hour without even an umbrella over us and with the prospect of eating warm bread and semi-liquid butter. But we found no difficulty in imagining some of the quiet pots of cider that many a jovial monk must have quaffed under that same tree. He and his brethren would, no doubt, be asked to sample the newly-run liquor as it plashed from the old cider mill still standing in the outhouse on our right, though long since pensioned off in an honourable retirement.

And talking of cider naturally takes the memory back to Caerwent. Here we arrived one afternoon at two o'clock, having been on foot since eleven. We wanted to see the local rose show and the Roman excavations. And it should be explained that when we left home—only ten days before—we had scarcely put out our winter fires. We also took with us nearly all our mid-winter wardrobe. By the time we reached Chepstow it was time for the full-bodied male of the party to take desperate measures to avoid either sunstroke or apoplexy. Chepstow is but a small place, and all that could be done was to don a white linen hat and a striped alpaca, ready-made, "hang-me-down," unlined jacket. It fitted where it touched; one sleeve was three inches too long, the other as much too short. Its pockets were small and limited to two. Now a photographer can only

get along with large pockets, and many. My usual jacket has seven pockets. Also, the roads about Caerwent were dusty.

All this is preliminary to what followed. We spied the tents of the rose show afar off, and trudged eagerly towards them. We had been photographing Caldecott Castle an hour previously, and had greatly enjoyed our experience there, and were looking forward to an equally enjoyable time at Caerwent. We did enjoy ourselves far more than we had expected, but not at the rose show, as you shall now hear.

We entered the field where the tents were and made for the refreshment booth. The show had evidently not begun, but the tent was all prepared for business—piles of cups and saucers, teapots, etc., etc., the usual items, including strawberries and cream.

We pulled ourselves together, so as to make ourselves look a little less like peripatetic tramps, and made for the entrance of the tent, where three ladies were refreshing themselves, waited on by a neatly-capped maid. It all looked so delightfully cool and inviting.

"Do you take strangers in"? we asked as sweetly as possible.

"No," was the laconic answer from the eldest and least pleasant looking of the three females. This rather staggered us: the atmosphere had somehow gone suddenly very cool. We explained that we were very tired and thirsty, and had rather looked forward to resting there. No use, the elderly sphinx would not budge. A younger lady did explain, as we turned sadly away, that the show would not open till three o'clock, but we felt we could not exist till three.

"It must have been the absence of waistcoat and the obtrusive presence of the alpaca jacket, with its ill-matched sleeves, that did it," one of us remarked.

We passed on up the village street, and paused abreast of the "Coach and Horses." We peeped into the bar parlour: that was sandy and cidery. We looked into the tap-room: that was cidery, but had no sand. The landlady, a smiling, good-natured motherly body, saw us, and we poured our tale of woe into her sympathetic ear.

"Come back in twenty minutes and I can supply you."

"Oh! woman in our hours of ease!" we murmured, as we turned away to put in the time in the church.

You may be sure our punctuality was exemplary. We returned to the "Coach and Horses," wondering whether our lot was to be cast in the sandy bar-parlour or the cidery tap-room. It was neither, but in the kitchen, where we found a feast awaiting us fit for the gods. Freshly gathered strawberries and raspberries, wonderful white currants, cream, tea, bread, butter—all of the county's best. In the corner by the empty fire-place stood a cradle, holding the last edition of the "Coach and Horses," who slumbered peacefully. Every bit of steel, iron, brass, glass, or delf in the kitchen positively made one blink with its brightness. The kitchen was cool; we had no company, except the silent member in his cradle; no sound, save an occasional "Missus, 'nother pot o' cider," from some dusty-throated carter. And we did not, staunch teetotallers though we are, grudge the honest fellows their pots. On the whole, when we had paid our score, and bid our landlady good-bye, we came to the conclusion that we had got more solid comfort and enjoyment out of the kitchen than we could have got perhaps out of the tent.

One more instance, and I have done. This time we are at Tewkesbury, and on our way to the old Saxon Church of Deerhurst. The distance is short, and we walked, but had to enquire our way. We went by road, and found when we reached the church that the distance by road is to the distance by river bank as eight to three. However, we were rewarded by very fine and wide views.

We had to enquire for the sexton before we could gain access to the church, and found the sexton was one Henry Margrett, a fine, honest fellow, with the manners of a gentleman. We are afraid that Henry, so far as his political principles are concerned, is sitting on the fence. He is wavering between Protection and Free Trade. Perhaps by this time he has jumped

down, and if so, let us hope he has landed on the right side.

Henry is a basket weaver in private life, and lives in an ideal cottage in the centre of a huge orchard. Black pigs also live in the orchard, but are strictly tabooed from Henry's private garden. His shed is in a corner of the orchard, and there, after lunch, I had great pleasure in photographing him and one of his hands. Two other hands were too shy, and would not come out, though their shyness vanished at the sight of my cigarette case. Henry was very pleased some little time after with the result of the photograph.

He gave us tea in his best parlour, waited on by his favourite daughter. Simple fare, but everything above suspicion, so far as cleanliness was concerned.

And here we must stop, though we would like to say a few words about our experience at Chedworth, where Miss Hathaway entertained us, and provided us with real silver spoons. Her parlour floor is flagged, rather brokenly in places, so that the furniture has to be carefully placed, otherwise one leg of a table may be in a hole, whilst another is indelicately poised in mid-air. We should also like to tell about Wroxeter, where our dining-room had three doors, and where the knives and forks lived in the upstairs bedroom, being strictly divorced from the spoons, which occupied quarters in the kitchen.

Lastly, we should like to say something of our room at Stratford, where to reach one's bedroom one had to go downstairs, then across a kitchen, along a flagged passage, through an outhouse, through a yard, then another outhouse and another yard. Here you rest awhile, take breath, and begin again, pass through a second kitchen up a winding flight of stairs, and then, if you are not too giddy, you may find the handle of the bedroom door.

Reports.

Unity Guild.—If all those who had signified their intention of coming had been with us at Downpatrick on 15th August, the third excursion of the Unity Guild would have been as well attended as any this year. As it was, there was rather a sparse attendance. We received a very hearty welcome at Downpatrick Station from Rev. M. S. Dunbar, his son, and Mr. Joseph Newman. As Mr. Dunbar had unfortunately to attend a funeral, Mr. Newman kindly acted as our guide, and opened, for our benefit, that store of local knowledge which is his. Under his able leadership we proceeded at once to Inch Abbey. The day was warm, and the walk took us along the main road to Belfast, under the full glare of the sun. We were not sorry, therefore, when we turned off across the River Quoyle, and found ourselves in the cool shade of the overhanging trees. By this time some of the party had got detached from the main body, and, not knowing which road had been taken, turned back and spent the afternoon exploring Downpatrick. Meanwhile we had pushed on to Inch, and, having loitered among the magnificent ruins of the Abbey and the Holy Well, which lies beside it, we rested on the banks of the Quoyle. Here Mr. Newman arranged to take the party over the river on what was described as a raft, but which turned out to be something in the nature of a punt, manned by three small boys. It took several journeys to ferry our entire party across, as the boat could not be trusted with more than three passengers at once. We all got safely over at last, and strolled back towards Downpatrick. On the way we explored the Mound—an old earthen fort, which in primitive times protected Downpatrick from invasion. This fort must have been well nigh impregnable in those days. A moat guarded the outer rampart, behind which lay a second moat, which must be crossed before the final summit could be reached. Here our party rested again, and it was only when the time for tea approached that we could tear ourselves away from this wild, grand spot. And very welcome the tea proved. Here we again joined Mr. Dunbar, who brought Mrs. Dunbar too. One of the ladies, who professed

to be Irish enough to be superstitious, was much perturbed at finding herself sitting at table with twelve others. After our repast, for which we were indebted to our good friends at Downpatrick, we visited the Cathedral and St. Patrick's Grave, and wound up a very happy day at our own church. We made our way to the station in ample time for the train, still accompanied by those kind friends who had given so much time and thought to our entertainment.

* *

Ballyhemlin—The Sunday-school treat was held at Sand End, near Ballywalter, on Thursday, August 20th A considerable number of young people and friends gathered together and spent an enjoyable time among the bracken and on the sands. The catering was done by the Bloomfield Bakery in the usual satisfactory way. The congregation had the pleasure of the company of the families of the Rev. A. Turner, of Templepatrick, and of the Rev. E. Lockett, of Hastings, who are staying in the locality. It was generally agreed that the treat was one of the most enjoyable for years past.

* *

Clough.—The annual Sunday-school Fete was held on Saturday, July 25th, in Newcastle. The party, about 100 in number, was conveyed by train from Castlewellan and Tullymurry. Luncheon and tea were provided at the Pavilion. In the afternoon all proceeded to the beautiful demesne at the foot of Slieve Donard, where games and sports were held and indulged in till tea time. The party returned home in the evening by the 7 train after a most enjoyable day. The arrangements, etc., were made by Messrs. J. M'Cammon, H. Donnan, H. Moffett, and Rev. J. D. Davies.

Our treasurer, Mr. Allen, has just received a gift for the church in the form of a cheque for £60 from Mrs. Perry, of Dundrum, an old friend and a generous supporter of Clough Church.

* * *

Comber.—Comber Sunday-school had their Annual Excursion to Ardglass on July 4th. After the destination was reached the party was entertained to a substantial luncheon at the golf grounds. Afterwards games were indulged in. Many of the party explored the town, being much interested in seeing the herring curing, for which Ardglass is so famous. The Castle also proved of great interest. Tea was served at five o'clock in the golf club house. The party returned to Comber much pleased with the day's outing. On Sunday, July 5th, a special service was conducted by the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., the collection being for the benefit of the Sunday-school.

In response to our Moderator's request we had on 23rd August Collection for the National Relief Fund. The amount (£21 3s. 0d.) has been forwarded to the Prince of Wales.

* * *

Larne and Kilwaughter Sunday-schools.—The Annual Excursion of these schools took place on Tuesday, 7th July. The venue was Garron Tower, which is considered by all the ideal spot to go for a day of enjoyment. The pleasure of the drive along the coast, and the rugged scenery around the Tower are—

"Things of beauty and a joy for ever,
They will never pass into nothingness."

These pleasures, combined with the excellent facilities afforded by Messrs. M'Neill, Ltd., for their attainment, make our yearly excursion to Garron Tower such an item of importance in the lives of the children, and many others whose only "outing" it is, that to deprive them of it would be blotting out a bright spot indeed. The conveyances left the Sunday School about 9-30 a.m., and arrived in due time at the Tower, where, in a short time, tea, &c., was served, and everything done by the amiable and energetic manageress, Mrs. Sutherland, to make everybody comfortable. After refreshment all adjourned to the beautiful grounds to enjoy themselves at sports, or in viewing the beauties of nature, according to age or temperament. At 4-30 p.m. a second refreshment, consisting of lemonade and cake, was served to the children, after which a start was made for home, where we arrived about 9 o'clock. The teachers and everyone

concerned are happy to state that a most enjoyable day was passed without anything happening to mar its pleasures.

NOTE—Two important Reports (Kilwaughter and Templepatrick) have unavoidably been held over until next month.

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